



DIVERSITY@Work

A PUBLICATION OF THE OFFICE OF DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT & EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY,
A PROGRAM OFFICE WITHIN VA'S OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES & ADMINISTRATION

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<<http://www.va.gov/dmeeo/ca/daw.htm>>

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2006

WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITIES

Balance Between Work and Family Life Beneficial to Employees and Employers

In order to become an employer of choice—in order to attract and retain talented, well-qualified, high-performing individuals—employers need to keep their employees happy and productive. This can be especially difficult when growing numbers of employees are feeling stretched thin between their responsibilities at home and at work. Employees have lives outside of their jobs and away from the workplace and it can be difficult to manage responsibilities at work while also keeping up with duties as parents, spouses, and caretakers.

There is a way for employers to aid their employees in organizing their career and family lives. It's called "workplace flexibility." Not only can a flexible work environment help employees manage their responsibilities at home and at work, but employers can actually benefit from such work/life policies.

The Families and Work Institute identifies flexibility as: A way to define how and when work gets done and how careers are organized. It is not a one-size fits-all policy or program, but a variety of work options that reflect job responsibilities, life situations, as well as individual and business needs.

According to the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM's) "Human Resources Flexibilities and Authorities in the Federal Government," the Federal Government is committed to helping employees meet the responsibilities of work and home life and is a leader in providing family-oriented leave policies and flextime and telecommuting arrangements to support a positive work culture and environment.

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CELEBRATE!

National Hispanic Heritage Month and National Disability Employment Awareness Month

VA proudly joins the Nation in celebrating a number of observances this time of year. **National Hispanic Heritage Month** will be observed from September 15 through October 15. This year's theme is "Hispanic Americans: Our Rich Culture Contributing to America's Future."

Overall, VA employment of Hispanics grew to 6.82 percent in fiscal year (FY) 2005. Also, Hispanics in the leadership pipeline grew to 5.12 percent in FY 2005. Hispanic veterans among Hispanic employees grew to 34.60 percent in FY 2005. To learn more about VA's Hispanic Program, contact José Marrero, EEO Specialist, at Jose.Marrero@va.gov.

Additionally, **National Disability Employment Awareness Month** will be

celebrated throughout October. This year's theme is "Americans with Disabilities: Ready for the Global Workforce."

Coinciding with this observance is **Disability Mentoring Day**, which will be observed on October 18 this year.

Overall, VA employed 20,314 persons with disabilities, which was 9.47 percent of its workforce, in FY 2005. Targeted disabilities totaled 3,380 (1.58 percent). VA employed 17,262 disabled veterans, which was 7.29 percent of its workforce.

For information on VA's People with Disabilities Program, contact David Walton, National Program Manager for People with Disabilities, at David.Walton@va.gov. ■

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BOOKMARKS

- ▶ **American Institute for Managing Diversity**
www.aimd.org
- ▶ **Association for Spirit at Work**
www.spiritatwork.com
- ▶ **Black Leadership Forum**
www.blackleadershipforum.org
- ▶ **Diversity Leadership Forum**
www.diversityleadershipforum.org
- ▶ **Hispanic Alliance for Career Enhancement**
www.hace-usa.org
- ▶ **Institute for Community Inclusion**
www.communityinclusion.org
- ▶ **National Hispanic Council on Aging**
www.nhcoa.org
- ▶ **Native Council on Aging**
www.ncoa.org
- ▶ **World at Work**
www.worldatwork.org

Contact information for other diversity-related organizations can be found on the DM&EEO Web site at: www.va.gov/dmeeo/org

FIELD NOTES

News You Can Use

MOU Between VA and AISES

Secretary R. James Nicholson approved a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES). AISES is a national, nonprofit organization that nurtures the building of community by bridging science and technology with traditional Native values. Through its educational programs, AISES provides opportunities for American Indians and Alaska Natives to pursue studies in science, engineering, and technology arenas.

The MOU will provide a cooperative framework for VA and AISES to develop and establish a partnership program that will foster a mutually supportive relationship and the development of initiatives to increase employment and educational opportunities in VA for students of AISES-affiliated schools. These students will be encouraged to pursue careers in science, health and allied health, medical research and development, and other career fields critical to VA. The partnership will also expand and strengthen the role of AISES-affiliated schools in support of VA's mission.

The MOU is scheduled to be signed at the 2006 AISES National Conference to be held November 2–4 in Detroit, Michigan.

CPP Summit

The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), in concert with VA and the American GI Forum, will host the first Community Prosperity Partnership (CPP) summit, "Honoring Hispanic Veterans," in San Juan, Puerto Rico, from October 31 to November 2, 2006. Those interested in supporting the summit can contact Executive

Director Brent Wilkes, National LULAC, at <veterans@lulac.org> or (202) 833-6130. For more information on CPP, visit <www.va.gov/cpp>.

Guide to Conducting Workforce Analysis

DM&EEO has updated the Guide to Conducting Workforce Analysis. This is a non-technical handbook designed to alert a wide range of managers, human resources specialists, and EEO specialists to the workforce analysis tools available online in VA, demonstrating how to use them and offers suggestions on how to analyze the resulting data. This is not a Management Directive 715 (MD-715) handbook, but it does provide the tools to drill into the MD-715 tables.

The updates include the new tools developed dealing with grade parity, awards, and upward mobility. The handbook has also been reorganized so that it is easier to look up the proper tools for onboard counts and trends, gains, grade parity, and succession planning and recruitment. The guide is available by e-mail request to <dmeeo@va.gov> and on the Web at <www.va.gov/dmeeo/docs/WorkforceAnalysisGuide.doc>.

Diversity News

Look for DM&EEO's monthly news program, *Diversity News*, on the VA Knowledge Network's Communications Channel 2 or on the Web at <www.va.gov/dmeeo/ca/diversitynews.htm>. To submit story ideas, comments, or suggestions, please e-mail <dmeeo@va.gov> with the words DIVERSITY NEWS in the subject line.■

WEB SITE SPOTLIGHT

When Work Works

<http://familiesandwork.org/3w/toolkit/webpage-toolkit.html>

Content: Workplace flexibility can be an effective strategy to enhance businesses' competitive advantage in the global economy and yield position business results, while also enabling employees—men, women, parents, non-parents, employees of all ages and at different earning levels—to better manage their responsibilities at home and work.



highlight research findings on the importance of workforce effectiveness and workplace flexibility.

Must-See Features: Under the "Tip Sheets" tab, guides for employees and supervisors can be found that can aid managers and employees in working towards creating more effective workplaces.

When Work Works is an initiative from Families and Work Institute in partnership with The Center for Workforce Preparation, an affiliate of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and the Twiga Foundation with funding from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation to

Contact Info: Families and Work Institute
(212) 465-2044
<WhenWorkWorks@familiesandwork.org>

Accessibility: No information offered.■

The Honorable R. Allen Pittman Recognized at SAIGE Conference

By Max Collier, DM&EEO

At the recent Society of American Indian Government Employees (SAIGE) Conference, the Honorable R. Allen Pittman was recognized with the 2006 SAIGE Outstanding Achievement Award for his personal commitment and professional initiative in contributions in recruiting, retaining, and providing career advancement opportunities to American Indian employees in the VA workforce.



*Mr. Pittman and SAIGE
National Chair, Cheryl Zwang*

SAIGE held their 3rd Annual National Training Conference from August 28–31, 2006, in Anchorage, Alaska. The theme of the conference was “One People: A Diversity of Culture.” Mr. Pittman spoke at the conference on leading change and championing diversity in VA and making VA the employer of choice; challenging the status quo and partnering to create opportunities and strategies for the future. When Mr. Pittman spoke at the conference last year, he offered a partnership between SAIGE and VA to develop a recruitment strategy for increasing American Indian and Alaska

Native employment. This year, he extended VA’s commitment to follow through on that offer whereby VA was the first Department to provide a key member on SAIGE’s National Federal Recruitment Strategy Committee. VA worked with the Board of Directors throughout the year, providing guidance and assistance for their annual conference. Departments of Defense, Interior, and Agriculture also provided a pre-conference forum. Extensive workshops were held at the conference on topics such as diversity, reasonable accommodations, and professional development.

Collaboration with SAIGE will provide VA a gateway into the American Indian and Alaska Native communities to provide tools, training, and information—in a variety of formats—on the multitude of services and benefits that are available to veterans and their dependents as well as career opportunities at VA for all American Indians and Alaska Natives.■

Workplace Flexibilities

(Continued from Page 1)

These work arrangements and work/life policies include the use of flexible work schedules and telecommuting; leave programs (leave sharing, leave banks, leave for medical conditions, and family responsibilities); part-time employment and job sharing; Employee Assistance Programs; Employee Health and Wellness Programs; on-site child development centers; and information and referral services.

VA offers a number of work/life benefits to their employees which can help workers better manage their home and work lives, including:

- ▶ Telework
- ▶ Compressed work schedules
- ▶ Alternative work schedules (flexible and compressed work schedules)
- ▶ Dependent care for adoption, child care, elder care, fatherhood, kinship care, and nursing mothers
- ▶ Worklife4u program
- ▶ Health & wellness programs
- ▶ Childcare subsidy

Flexibility is often viewed as simply a benefit or

accommodation to employees, but employers can also benefit. Organizations can use it as a tool for improving recruitment and retention, for managing workload, and for responding to employee diversity. The Families and Work Institute also argues that flexibility is important to business to raise morale and job satisfaction, to improve productivity, and to reduce stress or burnout. According to OPM, while effective use of flexibilities can assist agencies in managing their workforces, the ineffective use of flexibilities can significantly hinder the ability of federal agencies to recruit, hire, retain, and manage their human capital.

For more information on workplace flexibilities, visit <www.familiesandwork.org>. You can also learn more about workplace flexibilities that VA offers on the Office of Human Resources Management and Labor Relations Web site on work/life on the VA intranet at <vaww1.va.gov/ohrm/WorkLife/WorkLife.htm>. Workplace flexibilities is also the topic of the September edition of *Diversity News* now airing on the VA Knowledge Network’s Communications Channel 2 or on the Web at <www.va.gov/dmeco/ca/diversitynews.htm>.■

OTHER USEFUL LINKS

**Department of
Veterans Affairs**
<www.va.gov>

VA's Office of Human
Resources & Administration
<www.va.gov/ofcadmin/portal>

VA's Office of
Resolution Management
<www.va.gov/orm>

VA's Office of Human
Resources Management
and Labor Relations
<www.va.gov/ohrm>

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VA's Office of

DM&EEO ONLINE



The DM&EEO mission is to increase awareness and promote acceptance of diversity and equal employment opportunity throughout the Department of Veterans Affairs. Our vision is to ensure an environment that fosters respect, fairness, and opportunity for all employees.

Visit us on the Web at <www.va.gov/dmeeo>.

Here's a sampling of online tools available that can help to promote the employment of veterans, women, minorities, and people with disabilities:

- ▶ National Hispanic Heritage Month, National Disability Employment Awareness Month, and other special observance resources.
- ▶ 2006 events, conferences, conventions, and programs.
- ▶ Links to professional and community organizations.

DM&EEO also publishes summaries and links to recent diversity-related articles or other publications gathered from a variety of online sources. For a FREE subscription to this weekly electronic news service, *NewsLink*, e-mail us at <dmeeo@va.gov> with SUBSCRIBE NEWS in the subject line.

2006 DIVERSITY CALENDAR

<www.va.gov/dmeeo/calendar>

SEPTEMBER

**Historically Black Colleges and
Universities (HBCU) Week**
September 10–16

**First National Conference on Mentoring
for Youth with Disabilities**
September 13–15; Boston, MA
[www.regonline.com/eventinfo.asp?
eventid=94889](http://www.regonline.com/eventinfo.asp?eventid=94889)

**National POW/MIA
Recognition Day**
September 15

National Hispanic Heritage Month
September 15–October 15

DeafNation Expo
September 16; Seattle, WA
September 23; Denver, CO
www.deafnation.com

**United States Hispanic Chamber of
Commerce National Convention**
September 20–23; Philadelphia, PA
<http://ushcc.com>

**National Black MBA Association, Inc.
Annual Conference & Exposition**
September 26–October 1; Atlanta, GA
www.nbmbaa.org

OCTOBER

**National Disability Employment
Awareness Month**

Polish-American Heritage Month

Italian-American Heritage Month

German-American Heritage Month

DeafNation Expo
October 7; Chicago, IL
October 28; Pleasanton, CA
www.deafnation.com

Disability Mentoring Day
October 18

Closing the Gap Annual Conference
October 19–21; Minneapolis, MN
www.closingthegap.com

**Society for the Advancement of
Chicanos and Native Americans in
Science National Conference**
October 26–October 29; Tampa, FL
www2.sacnas.org

**Hispanic Association of Colleges
and Universities Annual Conference**
October 28–31; San Antonio, TX
www.hacu.net